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BC-COUP-PROFILE 10 PARIS

HIS RULE WAS CHARACTERIZED BY A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP WITH FRANCE, THE COUNTRY'S FORMER RULER, ALTHOUGH PARIS REMAINED THE MAIN SUPPLIER OF AID THROUGHOUT.

IN 1969, PRESIDENT BOKASSA PAID AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO FRANCE TO MEET PRESIDENT DE GAULLE, A MAN HE DESCRIBED AS ''MY ADOPTED FATHER''.

HIS VISIT WAS PRECEDED BY THE ARRIVAL OF A SPECIAL FREIGHT AIRCRAFT CONTAINING PRESENTS FOR THE FRENCH PRESIDENT -- A PANTHER, TWO GIANT TORTOISES, TWO PARROTS AND TWO MONKEYS.

AT DE GAULLE'S FUNERAL IN NOVEMBER, 1970, HE CRIED BITTERLY AND DECLARED ''I AM NOW AN ORPHAN''. LATER, HE WAS ALSO TO CALL IVORY COAST PRESIDENT FELIX HOUPHOUET-BOIGNY ''MY ADOPTED FATHER'' AND FRENCH PRESIDENT VALERY GISCARD D'ESTAING ''MY VERY DEAR PARENT.''

PRESIDENT BOKASSA BURST INTO TEARS PUBLICLY ONCE MORE, BUT WITH JOY, WHEN A FRENCH CARAVELLE AIRLINER WHICH HE HAD ORDERED TOUCHED DOWN IN CENTRAL AFRICA. THE PERSONAL PLANE BORE HIS NAME EMBLAZONED ON THE SIDE. THE PRESIDENT IMMEDIATELY DECORATED THE FRENCH CREW AND GAVE A PARTY ON BOARD.

REUTER 0652

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY RLS DATE 10/27/82
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